

Manawatū



Standardisation of written Spanish (Castilian) 13th century by King Alfonso X of Castile, known as Alfonso el Sabio (Alfonso the Wise), in his court in Toledo. He assembled scribes at his court and supervised their writing, in Castilian, of extensive works on history, astronomy, law, and other fields of knowledge.

From first Seminar Presentation: How Spanish came to be"

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Cindy Buckley-Taine
Peter Feldberg
Lilian Ferreira
Barry Foster

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Changes to your contact details

If you have any changes to your contact details please advise Anne Spring, the Membership Secretary, anne.spring35@gmail.com or 021 190 6322. This will ensure you continue to receive these newsletters and any other information from us.

Contributions to our newsletter

We would love you to contribute to our newsletter! Please contact the Editor, Rosemary Krsinich, rkrsinich@gmail.com or 326 9598

New email and postal address

Please note our new email and postal address (we no longer have a PO Box). Email: u3amanawatu@gmail.com
Post: 4 Bryant Street,
Palmerston North 4412

FROM THE CHAIR



Chris van der Krogt
Chairperson
U3A Manawātū

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter

On another page of this issue, you will find my report on the activities of the U3A Manawātū for the past year. We are just one of an estimated 3500 branches throughout the world, so it may be of interest to place our group in its broader context.

The U3A is a loosely organised movement: each branch maintains its own membership and manages its own finances and activities. What we do depends on the interests and resources of the local branch membership. Here in Palmerston North, our main activities are operating learning groups and our biannual public seminar series.

Originally, the U3A was linked to University of Toulouse where Pierre Vellas, a law professor, founded the movement in 1973. The idea was taken up in the UK from 1981 by Nicholas Coni, a geriatrician, and Peter Laslett, a Cambridge historian with an interest in the ageing process.

They decided, however, that, unlike the Continental model, there would be no formal courses, assessments, or diplomas. Following the British pattern, we keep the name University of the Third Age (the retirement phase of life), but we have no connection with the universities and only use the word very informally.

There are 250 U3As in Australia and 90 in New Zealand. Larger cities like Auckland and Christchurch have many suburban branches (28 and 15 respectively). Few could match the variety of activities offered by our single Manawātū branch.

For people who are no longer in full-time employment, the U3A provides a wonderful opportunity to maintain social contacts, engage in fun activities, and learn about new topics.

As we near the end of the year, you may like to think about coordinating an interest group for 2026. If you have a proposal, do contact me about how to set it up.

Wishing everyone a happy Christmas and a pleasant summer,

Chris van der Krogt

At the **AGM** on 24th September, it was agreed that the following amendment to Rule 4(e) of the **U3A Manawatu Constitution** be accepted:

Under **MEMBERSHIPS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS** delete rule 4 (e) which reads as follows:

"Membership is deemed to have expired if the annual subscription remains unpaid for six (6) months beyond the due date."

Replace with:

"Subscriptions are required to be paid by 31st March each calendar year or membership will be deemed to have lapsed.

Members who join partway through a calendar year will need to renew their subscription at the start of the new calendar year as there are no pro rata rates. If for any reason a member duplicates subscription payments, they must be offered the choice of a refund of the duplicate payment or have the funds carried over as a subscription for the following calendar year. Their decision must be documented and actioned accordingly. If there is no response to the query regarding said payment, it will be treated as a donation."

This gives the committee explicit guidelines on how to manage those who pay their annual subscription more than once or not at all (a fairly common issue). The annual subscription deadline of 31st March brings us into line with other U3As in New Zealand.

Reminders are given by Group Coordinators, placed in the newsletters and on the website.

SPRING 2025 SEMINAR SERIES

Linguistics and Languages

We are halfway through our free public Spring Seminar Series. The two remaining seminars will be held from 1.30 to 2.45 pm on 5th and 12th November in the City Library:

5th November: The secret life of language
Dr Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire

12th November: The power of visual language: a brief history of art in the Hispanic world
Francisco Gonzalez

Note that the audio recordings and PowerPoint presentations will be made available on our website afterwards. For more details see:

<https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz/seminars/>

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT to the AGM 2025

I have the pleasure of presenting the annual report on the U3A Manawatū for the year ending September 2025.

As of 12 September, we have 253 paid-up members – a very small decrease on the 269 we had at this time last year. There are 96 men and 157 women.

We currently have about 36 learning groups as compared with some 40 last year. In July, the committee agreed to set up a fund from which group co-ordinators can be reimbursed up to \$50 to cover the cost of inviting a guest speaker to one of their meetings.

On 20 November 2024 and 18 June 2025, we held afternoon teas for the committee and group co-ordinators. These have proved useful opportunities to share ideas and get to know each other.

As in previous years, we have held two public seminar series over the past year, organized principally by Stuart Birks and Mike Lawrence in spring 2024 and autumn 2025. The first of these was entitled "Manawatū Memories: Reflecting on the past, Embracing the Future" and the second was "Making a Difference: The Power of Volunteering in the Manawatū". There are reviews of these seminars by Anne Spring in the February and August 2025 newsletters. This year's autumn series was kindly hosted by the City Library and professionally recorded courtesy of Manawatū People's Radio. Our next spring series is scheduled for October–November this year and will deal with "Linguistics and Languages".

In time for the autumn 2025 seminar series, Stu Schwartz on behalf of the committee commissioned two large mayfly banners (see the August 2025 newsletter). These use the official U3A style logo developed by the U3A in the UK. On the subject of publicity, Rosemary Krsinich has continued to edit our informative quarterly newsletter now using the Canva Premium

program supplied without charge to registered charities (back issues are online). We continue to supply a report on one of our groups for the quarterly Grey Power Manawatu. In August, I was interviewed by Ann Atkinson on Manawatū People's Radio about the U3A and its activities.

Apart from a break in January, your committee has met monthly in the Friends' Meeting House in College St. The committee elected at the 2024 AGM lacked a candidate for treasurer, but in October we co-opted Ian Boag to carry out this role.

We are conscious that as the Constitution allows committee members to serve for a maximum of five consecutive years from September 2023, most of us will have to step down by September 2028. To maintain continuity and collective memory, it is important that at least some new committee members are elected before then.

*Chris van der Krogt, Chairperson
September 2025*

Committee Members and Office Holders 2025–2026 FY

Chris van der Krogt: Chairperson
Ian Boag: Treasurer
Rosemary Krsinich: Secretary
Claire Barrett
Stuart Birks
Michael Lawrence
Stu Schwartz
Anne Spring

Contact details can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

Postage costs are escalating! Rather than increasing our annual subscription fees we are asking our members to select the post option for mailouts only if they are unable to receive email.



AROUND THE GROUPS

We currently have 36 learning groups running, some of which are currently full. Any U3A member can set up a group so if you have an idea for one, contact Chris van der Krogt to discuss it (see contact information on back page). There are also some general guidelines on our website [[click here](#)] on how to set up and run a group.

NEW GROUP for 2026:

Ibsen: Five Major Plays

by Stuart Lawrence: Group Coordinator

Next year I'm offering an excursion into Scandinavian noir: my five favourite plays by the great Norwegian dramatist Henryk Ibsen: *Ghosts*, *The Wild Duck*, *Rosmersholm*, *Hedda Gabler* and *The Master Builder*. Prominent themes include toxic idealism and the efforts to free oneself from guilt and the weight of the past with its stifling social conventions and inherited tragedy in order to move into a life of happiness and innocent joy. Ibsen's most powerful characters are often women struggling sometimes, in indirect and devious ways, against the confines of a repressive society. Assertive, manipulative and problematically fascinating women include Rebecca West (who provided a pseudonym for a British author) in *Rosmersholm* and the frightening, frustrated and bored Hedda Gabler who entices a former lover into what she hopes will be a 'romantic' suicide.

The texts of all the plays are available online.

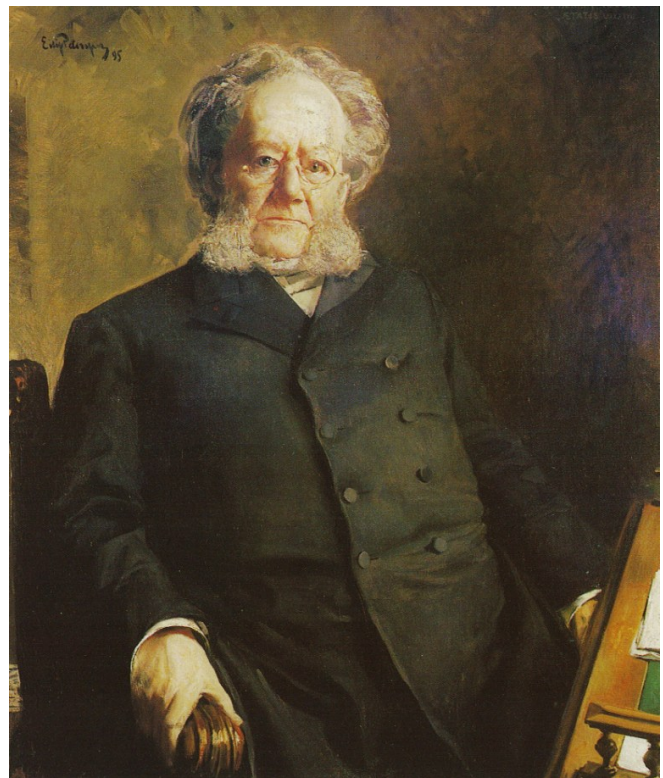
The group will meet at 10 am on the 4th Wednesday of the month starting in February.

If you are interested in joining please contact me, Stuart Lawrence, at 022 372 1792 or lawrence1054@gmail.com

Equipment available for groups

We have several pieces of equipment available to support group activities. These include a video projector, two audio recorders, a DVD player, a bluetooth speaker and a portable screen.

Your initial contact for these is Stuart Birks, 021 204 7903 or kstuartbirks@gmail.com



Henryk Ibsen by Eilif Peterssen – Nasjonalgalleriet; book Norske forfatterportretter, 1993, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2652829>

Not in the Gutter!

by Jan Black: Group Coordinator

That is a frequent cry among the members of our Ten Pin Bowling group. We run up to the lane (or walk, it doesn't really matter) and throw the bowl. We try to aim correctly but the bowl sometimes has a mind of its own and doesn't go where we want, hence the cry 'not in the gutter'.

However, if we get a strike we are really thrilled. This game gives us a little exercise, lots of laughs and some satisfaction when we do well. It's a lovely social time for one morning a month.

We have a small but enthusiastic group playing this wonderfully frustrating game once a month. We pay \$8 a game and play two games. Bowlarama has given us a discount.

The group meets at 10 am on the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

We would enjoy having more people to play with so if you are interested please contact me janblack2013@icloud.com

Hidden Memories: Writing our Memoirs 3

by Kathriona Benvie: Group Coordinator

Quotes from members of the group which shares and records members' memories and stories:

"For such a diverse group of people we have gelled really well together. I love our meetings"

"It is my favourite group"

"It is the best group and amazing that we have been meeting for four years sharing our memories"

"I think I know more about the lives of the people in our group than I do of many of my friends"

"I am writing about things in my life I had forgotten about until the monthly theme stirred a memory"

"I feel privileged that I get to hear about others' life journeys"

Hidden Memories meets at a negotiated time each month. Contact Kathriona Benvie, 027 605 1911 or timandkj@yahoo.co.nz



Jan taking aim



Jan throwing the bowl



The bowling lanes



Strike!

New Zealand History Group

by Graham Slater: Group Coordinator

This group meets monthly with the objective of presenting interesting topics of New Zealand history.

The programme is made up of a mix of invited speakers, and members from within the group, who undertake to research and present short talks.

We meet for tea/coffee and a social catchup before each meeting. In the past 12 months we have covered a wide variety of topics. These have included a look at the year 2000 issue known as the Y2K bug, the history of the gas and electric power services in the city, the Tongariro power scheme, followed the Mangahao dam and Hydro scheme, the long history of the Whanganui river boats, the abandoned settlement behind the Bridge to Nowhere, the history of the Denniston plateau and mine, the life and works of New Zealand inventor and aviation pioneer, Richard Pearse, and a look at the story behind the beginnings of Radio Hauraki and how it changed the broadcasting landscape in New Zealand.

We also have a slot in our sessions in which we encourage members to bring along and discuss items of historical interest from their lives. Some interesting stories and discussion have emanated from this activity.



New members are welcome. Feel free to contact me if you would like to know more, or have an interesting historical topic you might be able to present.

We meet on the first Thursday of each month at 10 am.

You can contact me at gandg@inspire.net.nz or 027 441 4023



Dr Ralph Body, from the City Archives, exploring the gas supply and reticulation which was the source of heat and light in the city prior to electric supply being introduced



Some members of the NZ History group at a recent meeting in the Friends' Meeting House venue

National Theatre Live **"Mrs Warren's Profession"**

*by George Bernard Shaw
Palmy Events Cinema*

*1 pm on Sunday 30th November &
10.30 am Wednesday 3rd December
Gold Card Holders: \$22*

*Check these dates and times closer to the event:
<https://www.eventcinemas.co.nz/Movie/Nt-Live-Mrs-Warrens-Profession#cinemas=517&date=2025-12-03>*

For the Love of Plants

by Heather Martin: Group Coordinator

Members of the For the Love of Plants group recently visited the Bason Botanic Gardens near Whanganui. The gardens are set on some 25 hectares and were founded in 1966 by Stanley & Blanche Bason who gave their farm to the city council. The gardens were developed between 1980 and 2000. The conservatories were constructed from the recycled bricks from two demolished Whanganui picture theatres. The gardens have been rated as a Garden of Significance by the NZ Gardens Trust and well worth a visit. The views over the rolling countryside are amazing and there are lots of walks although, because the grounds are extensive, driving around is recommended. The gardens are divided into several areas, including an orchid collection, native bush, wetlands, and also gardens with camellias, magnolias and roses. Much of the development work is conducted by the Bason Botanic Gardens Trust which collaborates with the Whanganui District Council.



An area of the Bason Botanic Gardens. Developed from bare farmland since 1966 and gifted to the citizens of Whanganui.

<https://www.gardens.org.nz/visit/son-botanic-gardens>

This group meets from 1–3.30 pm on the 4th Thursday of the month.

Contact Heather on 357 3125 or ellalinem@yahoo.co.nz.

There may be some spaces available in the new year.

Civil Defence Emergency Management

Preparing for Emergencies

A guide for how you can **stay safe**

Emergencies happen when we least expect them, so being prepared is important to ensure you stay safe when disaster strikes.

One of the most important steps you can take is to build a strong support network of trusted family, friends, and neighbours who can assist you during a crisis.



- **Share your emergency plan** with them, including details about any medical needs, mobility challenges, or medications you rely on.
- **Exchange phone numbers** and designate someone who can check on you in case of an evacuation or power outage.
- **Identify community or support groups** that offer assistance during emergencies, such as meal delivery or transportation.
- **Pack a small bag** with essential items such as bottled water, non-perishable snacks, a flashlight with spare batteries, a first-aid kit, and copies of important documents.
- **Consider arranging a backup power source** if you rely on medical equipment that requires electricity, or discuss alternative options with your doctor.

In addition to building your network, take steps to make sure you have an emergency kit that you can grab at short notice.

- **Keep a list** of your medications, medical equipment, and emergency contacts in an easily accessible location.



"Mind Games"

Topics to avoid at the dining table

Religion:

"The Puritan hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators." Thomas Macaulay – The History of England

Politics:

"Party struggles are to a people what change is to the hod carrier, as he shifts his hod from one shoulder to the other, a temporary but not a genuine relief..." Max Nordau – Conventional Lies of our Civilisation.

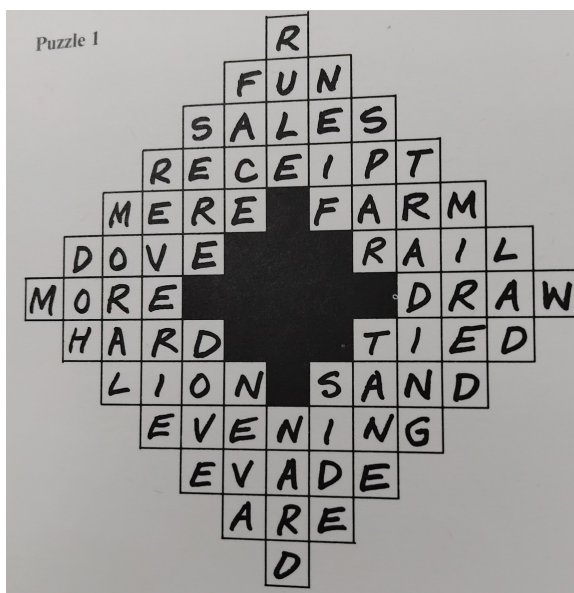
Sex:

"Give me chastity and continence, but do not give it yet." St Augustine – Confessions

From Guinness Book of Records:

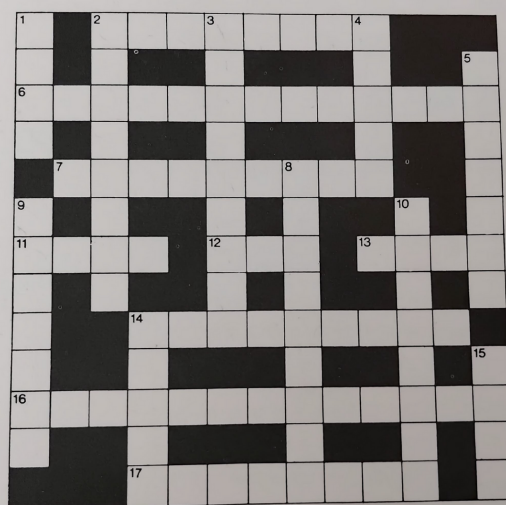
In his spare time between 1938 and 1949, Robert Stilgenbauer of Los Angeles constructed a crossword with 3,185 down clues and 3,149 across. Although 125,000 copies were distributed, none were returned completely, or even partially, worked out.

Solution to THE WORLD'S FIRST CROSSWORD (see August 2025 newsletter)



The following 1960s crossword was one produced by a Leicester agency to promote their client, a well known building society. It is described as a crossword advertisement giving the answer to investment problems.

3 down holds the clue to the perfect investment for your customers. Something offering complete security and a good rate of tax-paid interest, plus ready availability of their capital.



ACROSS:

- 2. See 3 down.
- 6. Highlights of the western. (8, 5)
- 7. That's why! (3, 6)
- 11. Monstrous person (4)
- 12. Look in torment for a rocky peak. (3)
- 13. The Frenchman's lady friend. (4)
- 14. See 3 down.
- 16. Muddled post traps mink in silence. (8, 5)
- 17. Late dice can be fragile. (8)

DOWN:

- 1. Put a question on attitude. (4)
- 2. Sons of my father. (8)
- 3. 14 across, 2 across, 9.
Confused girl entices city nien to bare up in Leeds (9, 9, 8, 7)
- 4. Mount and progress. (3, 2)
- 5. Land in the States. (7)
- 8. Wounding verbal scar I cast. (9)
- 9. See 3 down.
- 10. Cardinal address. (8)
- 14. Scottish musak? (5)
- 15. The nature goddess is repeated.

Remember to make use of our website, source of the latest information and an easy way to subscribe: u3amanawatu.org.nz

U3A Manawatu

Life-long learning in retirement



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